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GIVING THEIR VOICE BACK TO “SPEECH COMMUNITIES”: THE APV

Gianmario RAIMONDI

L'Atlas des Patois Valdôtains est né au début des années 1970, sous l'impulsion à la fois de l'administration régionale de la Région Autonome de la Vallée d'Aoste et du Centre d'Études Francoprovençales de Saint-Nicolas. Son but était d'explorer la variété des dialectes francoprovençaux utilisés, à partir de la méthodologie des « atlas régionaux » promus en France dans la deuxième moitié du 20^{ème} siècle, en exploitant les spécificités locales par le biais d'une recherche dialectologique et ethnographique détaillée. On présente ici une description du format éditorial choisi pour valoriser cet aspect de la recherche.

Mots-clés: Patois valdôtains, Région autonome de VDA, francoprovençal, Atlas linguistique, dialectologie

L'Atlas des Patois Valdôtains è nato all'inizio degli anni Settanta, su impulso congiunto dell'amministrazione regionale della Regione Autonoma Valle d'Aosta e del Centre d'Études Francoprovençales di Saint-Nicolas. Il suo scopo era l'esplorazione della varietà dei dialetti francoprovenzali della regione, sulla base dei principi metodologici degli « atlanti regionali » promossi in Francia nella seconda metà del Novecento, valorizzando le specificità locali attraverso una ricerca dialettologica ed etnografica minuziosa. Viene qui presentata una descrizione del formato editoriale scelto per valorizzare questo aspetto della ricerca.

Parole chiave: Dialetti valdostani, Regione Autonoma Valle d'Aosta, francoprovenzale, atlanti linguistici, dialettologia

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE ATLAS DES PATOIS VALDÔTAINS (APV)

APV is a geolinguistic project born in the first half of the 1970s, initiated by both the regional administration of the Autonomous Region of the Aosta Valley and the *Centre d'Études Francoprovençales* of Saint-Nicolas, with the aim of investigating the variety of Francoprovençal dialects in use in this Italian Alpine region (for a survey on the Francoprovençal linguistic group and specifically on the Aosta Valley, see Martin 1990, Favre 2002, Telmon *et al.* 2015).

The project responded to the scientific challenges of the time, that led to the creation of the so-called “Regional Atlases” in order to reach beyond the glorious phase of the “National Atlases” of the first half of the century, with the explicit aim of exploiting the most “local specificities” thanks to ethnographic research and dialectology. The angles of attack were a) disposing of a denser investigation network; b) paying attention to the par-

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ticular "cultural" (anthropologically speaking) situation of the areas under investigation; c) arriving at a deeper, anthropological understanding of the data.

Following the scientific debate promoted by French dialectologists (particularly Albert Dauzat and his project for the *Nouvel Atlas Linguistique de la France par Régions* in 1955), first in France and immediately after in Italy, a wide range of "second generation atlases" (as they were soon called, see Massobrio 1986: 28) thus found their place alongside the "classical" ALF-*Atlas Linguistique de la France* (Gilliéron & Edmont), AIS-*Sprach- und Sachatlas Italiens und der Südschweiz* (Jaberg & Jud), ALI-*Atlante Linguistico Italiano* (Bartoli *et al.*).

Like many other geolinguistic undertakings, the progress of APV has been significantly long-standing (see Favre/Raimondi 2012 for details).

The very first period of activity was devoted to structuring the research network (16 inner regional points, uniformly distributed over the territory and representative of its typical geo-linguistic configurations; 6 external checkpoints, situated in the bordering Francoprovençal areas) (1). It was also devoted to choosing the main tool for the investigation – the questionnaire – *i.e.* the *questionnaire Tuaillon* (so-called because of the name of its creator, French dialectologist Gaston Tuaillon, one of the promoters of APV), specifically designed for the Western Alpine area and comprising over 6.000 questions on many aspects (mountain landscapes; agriculture and farming; dairy activities; mining activities; Alpine architecture, etc.). Immediately following, a small team of investigators began conducting the interviews: the basic questionnaire was applied between 1973 and 1981, the supplementary questionnaire between 1986 and 1988 and the external checkpoints between 2000 and 2004.

Since the 1990s, APV has also undertaken a long (and ultimately unsuccessful) computerization process, that slowed it down and was recently discarded. On the other hand, the convention signed in 2005 between the Regional Administration and the new-born University of the Aosta Valley permitted setting up a permanent work group (2) and programming APV's future. The objective was to study, design and publish the Atlas, using the computerized material, making it widely available to a public not only of scholars but also of the "average" – but concerned – reader. This was an extremely important point, given the emerging objective of disseminating the knowledge acquired over the

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THE APV
PUBLISHING LAYOUT

1. HEADING
(EN TÊTE)

years of linguistic research and symbolically “giving it back” to the “speech communities” (Gumperz 1968 [2009]), which ultimately are its heirs.

Consequently, the idea of an eminently “legible” linguistic Atlas (see Favre/Raimondi 2012: 106) has gradually been gaining ground: an Atlas which doesn’t back down from the need to “mediate” in favour of various levels of readership. Over the last five years, the APV team has concentrated on accurately planning this cultural mediation, and on actually realizing the tables that will make up the first volume of the APV (*Le lait et les activités laitières* – dairy activities – scheduled for 2017). In the following pages I will provide a few examples.

The APV will be published in a large-format series; each volume will be devoted to one of the themes (or sub-themes) of the questionnaire, in order to obtain a sort of geolinguistic “monography”. The scientific, vehicular language is French, which is also one of the two official languages of the region (together with Italian) and the scientific language most commonly used in all Gallo-Romance dialectology.

An APV volume is composed of a sequence of items (*Articles*), each collecting the data resulting from a single question in the *Questionnaire* (dialectal answers, notes and others); this one-to-one relationship shapes the basic “referential grid” of the volume. Nonetheless, in order to obtain the desired degree of coherence and “informativity”, a certain amount of data has been shifted and/or rearranged into newly created items or sub-items (sometimes suppressed in case of clear incongruity). In the first volume, for example, the original 122 questions selected for the “dairy activities” theme were rearranged into 115 items, plus *ca.* 170 sub-items, *i.e.* lexical entries referring to supplementary notions (“referents”, or *Référents supplémentaires*, in the French Atlas meta-language), that didn’t figure in the original version of the questionnaire.

At maximum complexity, each item (*Article*) in the Atlas may contain up to eight informative elements, offering the reader a series of ordered data (1 to 6, see Fig. 1 and *infra*) and instruments for their interpretation (7 and 8).

Composed of the title in French (*Titre*), and accompanied by its translation in Italian, and by the item code (*Code-Article*), it is followed by the code of the question the data came from (*Code-Question*). There are also references to the other six linguistic

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2. ANALYTIC
MAP (CARTE
ANALYTIQUE)
AND TEXT TABLE
(TABLEAU TEXTES)

FÉNIS

QUART

atlases already published, both at a national (AIS, ALF, ALI) and a regional level (ALEPO-*Atlante Linguistico ed Etnografico del Piemonte Occidentale*, ALJA-*Atlas linguistique et ethnographique du Jura et des Alpes du Nord*; ALLy-*Atlas linguistique et ethnographique du Lyonnais*).

Analytic maps are the most traditional element of a linguistic atlas, that normally represents the sole access to the contents: the answers in dialect are transcribed in phonetic alphabets (the standard International Phonetic Alphabet – IPA). In APV, the full-size analytic maps are reserved for lexical items with a complete dataset for the 22 enquiry-points; the answers on the map can also be accompanied by symbols signaling the presence of secondary answers or notes.

According to the tradition of an ethnographic atlas, the questionnaire therefore included a certain number of “open questions”, whose formulation required the interviewees to produce extended texts such as lists of commented items, explanations of procedures and other kinds of less defined miscellaneous information. In the editing phase, these linguistic materials proved unsuitable for treatment on simple maps and a dedicated instrument, in the form of a table, was finally chosen. The tables of ethno-texts may contain transcriptions of the texts (whether recorded in their original form, *i.e.* in *patois*, inside the enquiry copy-books) in the normalised, alphabetic writing developed by BREL and today quite usual among “*patois*-writers”, or the summarised French version recorded by interviewers; in the first case, the French translation is provided (see below for two examples from APV 1-3 *What do you do with colostrum?*).

Lo baillén bèye i vatse vilèye, a ‘alle qu’i ‘on po couliquèye. I lo fan couée i dzeleunne, a ‘alle qu’i llé fè po gneun. I fiavon dé bouegnet aoué dé milga é dé fromèn, di viouc. Po aoué lo coloutro fran dé la premiye ‘ouye, ma après dove, trèi ‘ouye. [Nous le donnons à boire aux vaches vèlées, à celles qui ne sont pas coliqueuses. Ils le font cuire pour les poules, à celles qui ne leur fait rien. Ils faisaient des beignets avec du maïs et du blé, autrefois. Pas proprement avec le lait de la première traite, mais après deux, trois traites.]

La premì souye de cou la baillén bée a la vatse, si la dirèndze pa; aprì le-zatre souye baillén co i vi. Aprì la trèijima, catrima souye, fién co no de bouignet pe la pila, avouè de beuro, ou le fién couiè avouè de seucro, ma pocca. [La première traite parfois nous la donnons à boire à la vache, si cela ne

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3. NOTES (*NOTES*)

4. SECONDARY
ANSWERS (*AUTRES
RÉPONSES*)

5. ICONOGRAPHY
(*ICONOGRAPHIE*)

6. SUPPLEMENTARY
ITEMS (*RÉFÉRENTS
SUPPLÉMENTAIRES*)
AND SUPPLEMENTARY
MAPS (*CARTES
SUPPLÉMENTAIRES*)

la dérange pas; ensuite les autres traites nous les donnons aussi aux veaux. Après la troisième, quatrième traite, nous faisons aussi nous des beignets à la poêle, avec du beurre, ou bien nous le faisons cuire avec du sucre, mais peu.]

This sort of editing, which is of course primarily connected with the "textual nature" of materials, has two other advantages: firstly, it allows dialect speakers to recognise themselves in the linguistic environment proposed by the Atlas, much better than in technical IPA transcriptions; it also contributes to progressively building up a significant dialectal linguistic corpus, useful both at the scientific level related to possible, "corpus-based" linguistic applications in future, at the "language-planning" level, and at the level of "corpus planning"/"corpus constitution", which is evidently functional (Fishman 1974) in all subsequent, "linguistic policy" planning.

Notes contain all the more or less extended information given by dialect speakers in addition to their answers, preceded by the abbreviation of the concerned enquiry-point. As for ethno-texts (see *supra*), information may have been recorded in *Patois* or in French and the procedure of transcription follows the same principles. A translation in French is also provided (between air quotes) for the answers that don't literally correspond to the title of the item; square brackets mark all editorial interventions.

Secondary answers, when signaled by the symbols in the analytic map, are collected in boxes: one contains phonetic or morphological variants of the answer on the map, the other contains different lexical items for the same referent, sometimes proposed by the informants (synonyms, generalizations...).

Iconography, when present, is displayed in a dedicated box. Images might be photos borrowed from BREL collections, introduced to increase the potential information of an item, or else simply sketches (*croquis*) produced by the informants themselves during the investigation (Fig. 2).

The density of the network of references is probably one of the most distinctive characters of APV. By recovering all the information contained in the original enquiry copy-books and by interpreting the semantic values and internal relations of the answers dataset, the editing phase generated a considerable number of publishable sub-items. These new referents, produced spontaneously by informants as "supplementary information", have

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7. COMMENTARY
(*COMMENTAIRE*)

8. SYNTHETIC MAPS
(*CARTES
SYNTHÉTIQUES*)

been processed to give them the same editorial visibility as the original referents.

The two last elements in APV editing (commentary and synthetic maps) deal with aspects of data interpretation, paying special attention to "mediating" different levels of understanding of the item contents. Commentaries always refer to the data illustrated by the maps.

Each commentary is conceived as a short guide to fully understanding the item; its standard structure generally consists of two sections of variable length, the first mainly devoted to the illustration of bare data, the second focusing on the linguistic and/or ethnographical analysis of the data.

In the first section, the "item structure" (for example, the presence of supplementary sub-items, usually drawn from the additional information freely given by respondents is presented. The item structure is of course a consequence of the quality of "informative feedback" obtained from each single question, depending on whether or not a question has been fully understood by respondents, how the stimulus has interacted with their cognitive and social "taxonomy" (3), etc. In the second section, normally on the basis of the phenomena illustrated in the synthetic maps (see immediately below), the focus shifts to data interpretation, conducted according to the practice of historical linguistics (etymology and "history of words") and geo-linguistics (the geographical diffusion of linguistic and ethnological facts).

In order to operate a first mediation in direction of non-specialist readers, the APV project has included this traditional instrument of geo-linguistic studies in the normal structure of the atlas. Following the scholarly classification of the regularities resulting from the bare data and their consequent representation through abstract symbols, the geographical dimension of linguistic and ethnographic phenomena can be perceived more easily, independently from the ability to read and decrypt the IPA in the analytic map, thanks also to the aid provided by cross-referencing between small maps and commentaries.

There exist four types of Synthetic Maps (SM): lexical, phonological, morpho-syntactical and ethnographical. The standard format for lexical SM is the "onomasiological" one, answering the theoretical question "What's the dialect for X?" and typified on an etymological basis (for example, the verb used to express the notion 'to make milk go down the udder', before milking, from APV 1-11). Other lexical

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9. INDEXES

CONCLUSIONS

types are the "semasiological" ones ("What does X mean in this dialect?") and the "motivational" ones ("Which semantic association has generated the dialect for X?"), based on Stephen Ullmann's semantic theories (Ullmann 1959), pursued in the dialectological field by Mario Alinei (Alinei 1997).

Another relevant aspect of the APV layout is the set of indexes, designed to give the varied range of readers keys to access the contents of the atlas.

Alongside an ordinary Table of Contents (*Table des Matières*), that simply lists the atlas items (and sub-items), the first key is the "access by referent", provided by the Alphabetical French Index, where single words composing the French titles of items have been indexed.

A set of three linked indexes allows instead the "access by significant", that may take place moving from phonetic IPA transcription of a dialectal word (*Tableau-Pivot API*), but also from the simplified BREL transcription (see above, Fénis and Quart examples), introduced precisely as a "mediation instrument" in view of a full utilisation of the atlas contents by the average, non-specialist reader.

A traditional scholarly approach is nevertheless guaranteed by a set of Special Indexes based on Synthetic Maps and Commentaries, devoted to lexical, phonological, morpho-syntactical phenomena, as well as to ethnological issues.

From the choice of using a standard, alphabetical writing in the Notes and Indexes (along with IPA) to the introduction of a significant, accompanying iconographic set and to the arrangement of a large number of synthetic maps and the extended use of explanations in the Commentaries; and from the attention given to the many ways of accessing the atlas by an accurate and multi-focal indexing of its contents, we see that many of APV's editing options aspire to be highly functional, to semiotically enrich it in view of its publication, thus benefiting the largest number of readers possible, both specialists and non-specialists.

The "traditional linguistic atlas", whose series of uncommented maps faithfully reproduce in specialist-only alphabets the bareness of linguistic data, thanks to the format described above has been transformed, on one hand, into a true, "interpretative atlas" (as defined by Alinei 1994), capable of providing the reader with a guide to data interpretation and to the methods of modern linguistics and dialectology; and, on the other hand, into an instrument permitting self-identification and self-recognition.

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FOOTNOTES

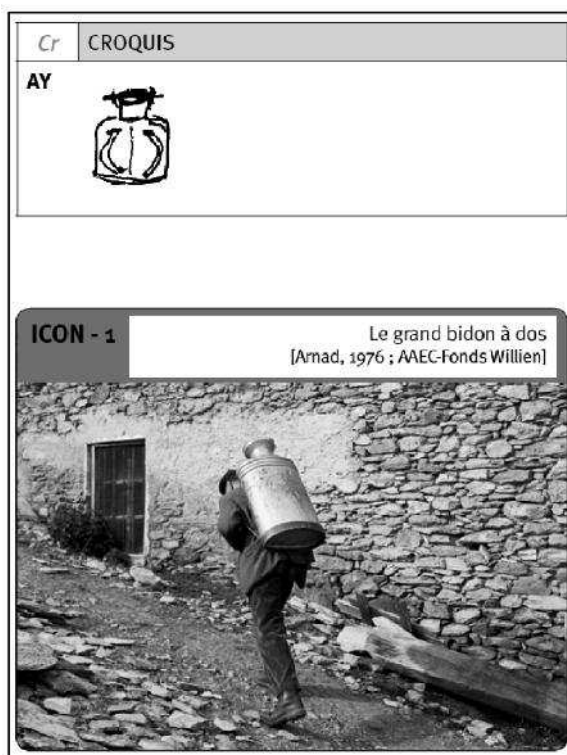
(1) The well known oppositions of the Aosta Valley dialectal *continuum*, i.e. *Alta Valle* (the Western Side of the valley) *vs.* *Bassa Valle* (the Eastern side) and *Plaine* (the main central valley, upstream the Dora river) *vs.* lateral, minor valleys, are well covered by the collocation of the 16 chosen inner points (from W to E: La Thuile, La Salle, Rhêmes-Notre-Dame, Valsavarenche, Saint-Oyen, Sarre, Cogne, Quart, Oyace, Fénis, Champorcher, Valtournenche, Emarèse, Ayas, Arnad, Gaby). The external checkpoints are Liddes and Évòlène in Swiss Valais, Les Contamines Montjoie and Tignes in French Savoy, Carema and Ribordone in Italian Piedmont.

(2) Directed by Saverio Favre (Regional Administration, BREL-Bureau Régional pour l'Ethnologie et la Linguistique) and Gianmario Raimondi (University of Aosta Valley), the editing group also includes Federica Diémoz (Université de Neuchâtel), Susanna Belley and Ivana Cunéaz (BREL), Roger Chuc and Daniel Fusinaz (*Guichet Linguistique*).

(3) See among others Canobbio/Telmon, 1994, for this founding principle in modern linguistics, in which the Bloomian concept was introduced by the ethno-linguist G.R. Cardona, and about its particular application in geo-linguistics (where this conceptual tool explains the differences of conceptualisation existing between standard languages, expressions of "standard taxonomies", and dialects, subjected to the shaping action of different "folk taxonomies").

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1

AUTRES ATLAS	ALJA	691	ALEPO	2376
AIS	971, 1203	ALP		
Alky		ALI		

→ 1-37 → 1-38

le grand bidon à dos (pour lait)

Il s'agit du type le plus répandu (cf. 1-37) et le plus courant (cf. 1-38) dans l'Atlas APV 1-38, qui forme un Groupe avec le présent Article. La spécificité de l'objet correspond à la spécificité des types lexicaux proposés par les répondants (CS-1) : "brette", brette d'origine d'origine répandue dans toutes les Alpes (mais dans l'espace linguistique roman que dans l'espace germanique) dans le sens général de "écopette" (chose pour le transport des liquides), maintenant (cf. FFW 1, 517) dans le sud-ouest du domaine, les représentants de la famille onomastique de "brette", diffuse de l'est gallo-roman à la Toscane pour la notion de "brette pour liquides" (cf. FFW 1, 617) et l'ETH (cf. aussi le sup. d'origine DEH) ; enfin, dans le sud-ouest de l'Al, le type brette, peut-être du gallo-roman "brette", d'origine (cf. FFW 1, 512 n.). Mots spécifiques, par exemple, le type onomastique (la « brette » pour l'objet) tiré de l'Al.

Les notes de "brette" constituent la base pour une analyse phonétique du mot "brette" (notamment celle de l'Al) : brette (notamment CS-2).

2

3

NOTES

AY DE tôle ["En tôle galvanisée"], CA ils m'ont pas de couvercle, ils sont en tôle, CH "— (du lait)", CO "— (du lait)", EM En aluminium, LI "— (du lait)", OY En tôle, QU "— (du lait)", RI il n'est pas spécifique pour le lait. On le chargeait sur le dos et on l'utilisait aussi pour aller prendre l'eau à la fontaine, SA 10-20 litres, VT 20-25 litres.

4

AUTRES LEXÈMES

AR na brette CA S'il était plus petit et avec le couvercle, RH la brette la brette

5

CROQUIS

6

1-37 R+ Références Supplémentaires

R+03 les brettes (du bidon à dos) GA brette

8

CS-1 / LEX

la brette

CS-2 / PHON

(la) / (la) (franc)

ICOM-1

Le grand bidon à dos (Atlas, 1976, AALC-France-Winter)